



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/539,659	01/17/2007	Max Aebi	001227/0204	4698
69095	7590	06/20/2008	EXAMINER	
STROOCK & STROOCK & LAVAN, LLP 180 MAIDEN LANE NEW YORK, NY 10038				YANG, ANDREW
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3733				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/20/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/539,659	AEBI ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	ANDREW YANG	3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 February 2008.

2a) This action is **FINAL**.                  2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-7, 11-19 and 22-27 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 22-27 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-7 and 11-19 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

## DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to Applicants' amendment filed on February 29, 2008.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-7 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell (U.S. Patent No. 7273496) in view of Pisharodi (U.S. Patent No. 6610093) and further in view of Krueger et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0143332).

Mitchell discloses an intervertebral implant 100 having a central axis, an upper section 110 and a lower section 120. The upper section 110 has a ventral side, a dorsal side, two lateral sides, a top apposition surface 112, and a bottom surface 116. The lower section 120 has a ventral side, a dorsal side, two lateral sides, a top apposition surface 122, and a bottom surface 126. The two sections 110, 120 are moveable with respect to each other (Column 3, Lines 27-30) via two joints arranged between the two sections. Each of the joints has a swivel axle and the two swivel axles are arranged perpendicular to each other as will be described herein. The two joints have an upper joint element 150 in the upper section 110, a central joint element 130, and a lower joint element 160 in the lower section 120. As seen in Figures 1D-1G, elements 150 and 160 define swivel axles that are perpendicular to each other. Each joint element also

has at least one axle coaxial to the swivel axle and a second joint element with at least one bearing shell, which will be further described herein. The central joint element has one axle 220 that is coaxial to the swivel axle defined by element 160 wherein element 160 is a bearing shell for receiving the axle. With regards to claim 3, Mitchell discloses the central element having an axle 210 coaxial to the swivel axle as defined by element 150 and the upper joint element 150 having a bearing shell for receiving the axle 210. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Mitchell with the central element having the bearing shell and the upper element having the axle, since it has been held that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. In re Einstein, 8 USPQ 167.

Mitchell fails to disclose the implant having roll bodies between the axles and the bearing shells. More specifically, Mitchell fails to disclose the roll bodies being rotation symmetric bodies, and the bearing shells having grooves for receiving the roll bodies or the axles having grooves for the roll bodies, wherein the grooves in the cross-section area orthogonal to the swivel axle are arranged in a circular arc with a sector angle between 0 and 180 degrees. Pisharodi teaches an intervertebral implant 10 with an upper section 22 and a lower section 24 that are movable relative to each other via a joint. The joint consists of an axle 38 and a bearing shell 39. The bearing shell 39 has grooves with bearings 52 therein (Figure 3). The grooves in cross section area orthogonal to swivel axle are arranged in a circular arc with a sector angle between 0 and 180 degrees (Figure 3). With regards to claim 6, Pisharodi fails to discloses the

axle having the groove with the bearings therein. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Pisharodi with the axle having the groove with bearings therein, since it has been held that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. In re Einstein, 8 USPQ 167. Furthermore, Pisharodi teaches the use of bearings 52 within the bearing shell 39, but more specifically the use of bearing between articulating surfaces in order to reduce friction and extend the life of the parts (Column 4, Lines 17-23). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Mitchell with a groove in the bearing shell or the axle with bearings there in, wherein the groove has a sector angle of 0 to 180 degrees in view of Pisharodi in order to reduce friction and extend the life of the implant.

Mitchell and Pisharodi disclose the claimed invention except for a means for keeping the ventral side areas at a fixed distance, and means for temporarily blocking mobility, where in the means is an insert with a lower end, an upper end, and a dovetail depression on the ventral sides where the insert can be inserted and the method associated with inserting the implant. Krueger et al. teaches an articulating implant a means 210 for keeping the two sections at a fixed distance and for blocking mobility and can be attached to the ventral side areas of the implant 100. More specifically, the means has an insert 218 that has an upper surface a lower surface, and the upper and lower sections of the implant 100 have a depression 114 for receiving the implant. The insert can be dovetailed to match the depression 114 (Paragraph 130). Furthermore,

the dovetail guides are tapered from the ventral side towards the dorsal side (Figure 42). In use, the insert 218 is inserted into the implant at depression 114, the implant is inserted into the intervertebral space, and the insert 218 is removed after inserting. If further positioning is required, the insert 218 can be reinserted and the implant adjusted (Paragraphs 129-134). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Mitchell in view of Pisharodi with a dovetailed shape insert and a complimentary depression in the plates to block mobility and keep the implant at a fixed height in view of Krueger et al. Using the known method and device as taught by Krueger et al. to install an implant would have been obvious to one skilled in the art.

Claims 14 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell (U.S. Patent No. 7273496) in view of Pisharodi (U.S. Patent No. 6610093) in view of Krueger et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0143332) and further in view of Michelson (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0052656).

Mitchell, Pisharodi, and Krueger et al. disclose the claimed invention except for the upper and lower sections having two threaded drill holes running through the ventral side to the apposition surfaces with longitudinal axes forming an angle in the range between 20-65 degrees and diverge from the inner surfaces against the apposition surfaces. Michelson teaches an intervertebral implant 800 having upper and lower members. Each member has two threaded holes passing from the interior of implant 800 through the apposition surfaces (Figures 42-46). With further reference to the figures, the holes form angles with the central axis and diverge from the inner surfaces

against the apposition surfaces. The holes are for rigidly securing the implant to the vertebral segment and also to pull each of the adjacent vertebral bodies toward the implant and towards each other (Paragraph 157).

The angle which the longitudinal axes of the holes makes with the central axis is not disclosed, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the holes at an angle between 20 and 65 degrees in relation to the central axis, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Furthermore, the shape of the holes is not disclosed, however, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the holes that are conically tapered towards the apposition surfaces, since applicant has not disclosed that such solve any stated problem or is anything more than one of numerous shapes or configurations a person ordinary skill in the art would find obvious for the purpose of providing a forming edge in the heating portion or clamp. In re Dailey and Eilers, 149 USPQ 47 (1966).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Mitchell as modified by Pisharodi and Krueger et al. with two threaded drill holes running through the ventral side to the apposition surfaces with longitudinal axes forming an angle in the range between 20-65 degrees and diverge from the inner surfaces against the apposition surfaces in view of Michelson so

that the implant can be rigidly secured to the vertebral segments and also so each adjacent vertebrae can be pulled towards each other.

***Response to Arguments***

In response to Applicants' argument that Mitchell or Pisharodi fail to disclose a depression, the Examiner agrees. However, Mitchell and Pisharodi are not used to teach depressions, but instead Krueger et al is used to further modify Mitchell to teach depressions. With regard to the insert, it is only functionally recited, and is thus considered that the depressions need only to have the ability to receive an insert which is threadably connected to the upper or lower member.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 22-27 allowed.

***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. U.S. Patent No. 6176882.

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ANDREW YANG whose telephone number is (571)272-3472. The examiner can normally be reached on IFP.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Andrew Yang/  
Examiner, Art Unit 3733  
6/18/2008

/Eduardo C. Robert/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3733